* iceblink

Picked to Click 2020

is the Twin Cities music scene's

best new artist





CITY PAGES

October 21-27, 2020



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By CP staff

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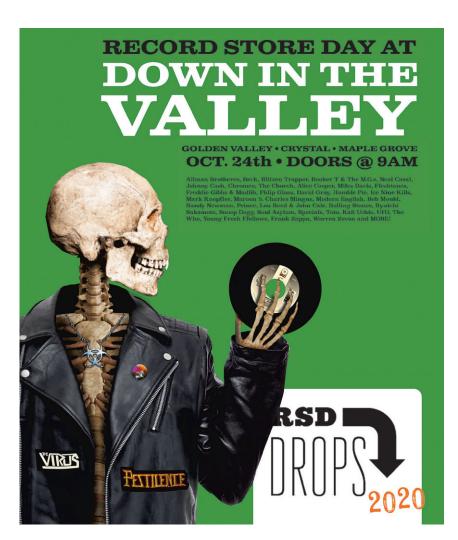
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Plaintiffs in a suit saying officials violated rights of homeless in encampments

"Assuming these are the same people that don't allow me to merge safely onto 35E or 94?"

Reader Leanne Cantin responds to "Survey: Minnesotans rank among the nation's highest to leave negative reviews" at citypages.com.

BALLOT BOX BOOM

IF YOU'VE ALREADY shipped off your absentee ballot, you're in good company: MPR reports that as of Friday, 900,000 Minnesotans have cast their votes for the November 3 election. That's more than were cast statewide in 2016's presidential race (675,000), with two weeks to go until actual Election Day. Early birds tend to be DFLers—about a third of registered voters have submitted ballots in heavily Dem counties like Hennepin and Ramsey—and 744,000 absentee ballots are still out there, requested but not yet returned. (Don't forget!)

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SWIFT ACTION FROM MPD

Deputy chief demoted for 'white boys' comment

rt Knight has a problem, and it is that he sometimes says things that are a little too true for his own good.

Back in January, Knight, a 28-year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department, was testifying to the City Council about police de-escalation tactics and the use of body cameras. Speaking in a less charged, pre-George Floyd moment, Knight candidly and casually guessed "3 to 6 percent" of the people on the force shouldn't be.

"I'll be the first one to say that," Knight said. "We have some members on this force that shouldn't be there."

The first and the last, apparently. Department spokesman John Elder later told City Pages what Knight meant was that cops deal with "3 to 6 percent of the population."

Sure. That's what he meant.

At the time of that City Council meeting, Knight was deputy chief of the department and chief of staff, a position he'd held since 2017. That ended Monday, according to a report by KMOJ, which says Knight was swiftly demoted to lieutenant following a statement published in Sunday's Star Tribune.

Knight was quoted exactly once in a lengthy story about attempts to diversify police departments, and it wasn't even a full sentence. Here's the whole thing:

In Minneapolis, budget cuts terminated the Community Service Officer program, a two-year curriculum that funnels diverse applicants onto the Police Department while they earn their law-enforcement degree.

Top brass hopes to restore the program next year but admit they will have to take another look at the way the agency recruits, trains and promotes ethnic minorities and women on the force. If you keep employing the same tactics, said MPD chief of staff Art Knight, "you're just going to get the same old white boys."



CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

That's it.

KMOJ says it did not hear back from department Chief Medaria Arradondo about Knight's demotion, and it's not clear whether the "people... offended" were simply Star Tribune readers or, perhaps, his fellow cops. Knight, for his part, tells the radio station "it's a shame one sentence could hijack the

narrative." Knight said anyone upset about his phrasing is missing the larger point.

"People should be more offended at the lack of diversity in the department rather than my word choice."

Knight added that he plans to take a few days to consider what to do in response to his demotion. —MIKE MULLEN



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* iceblink*

is the Twin Cities music scene's best new artist

n uncertain times, experts say, it's important to stick to a routine.

Establish regular sleep patterns. Eat meals at the same time each day. Do whatever it takes to give your otherwise out-of-control life some reasonable semblance of structure.

Well, the staff of City Pages hasn't quite followed those guidelines over the past year. We might seem cool and composed on the outside, but we're a mess. We sleep and eat too much or too little. We're sometimes anxious and sometimes depressed and never neither.

But still, we're determined to keep to some sort of routine. That's why, even as live music has been put on pause and bands haven't spent as much time together, we still did what we do every fall: We polled our roster of writers, musicians, fans, and assorted music industry professionals to find out who the best new artists to emerge in 2020 were.

Fewer voters responded to this year's call, as we expected, but those who did selected, as always, a worthy Picked to Click lineup. And our winner, Iceblink, a solo electronic project, provided music as soothing and dense as anyone stuck at home this year could ask for.

Now we're going to work on remembering to eat breakfast every morning.

1. ICEBLINK

Musicians can be shy about citing their influences. Not Lynn Avery.

After a half-hour phone chat with Avery, the creative mind behind the instrumental project Iceblink, I could compile a fully annotated bibliography of the sounds that inspired her January release, *Carpet Cocoon*.

She tells me of the hours of omnivorous listening and obsessive digital tinkering that went into crafting the electro-pastoral concoctions that have proved to be an ideal soundtrack for a year of indoor isolation, as simple and comforting, as, well, rolling yourself up in a rug.

Avery started Iceblink as a side project while still playing in the trio Xylophone Jetty. "I was really interested in the sound of space-age rock, like Broadcast and Stereolab, and the kinds of things that inspired that movement, what they were listening to, these experimental art-rock

lived in some era in the past, while feeling simultaneously like a present echo, or like a ghost of the past."

Avery constructed all this with the aid of flautist Mitch Stahlmann and saxophonist Cole Pulice (who's made a name for himself in Godspeed You! Black Emperor and Bon Iver). The three musicians also work together as LCM. "We improvise electronic and wind music together, try to create these systems where we're feeding back into each other's instruments," Avery explains. "We're basically constructing one big instrument that we play together."

saxophone like it's a clarinet." Now she says, "I don't even know what that means. But he did it. He did exactly what I wanted him to do."

For all the work that went into it, though, *Carpet Cocoon* never sounds labored. "I wanted to create something homey and comforting," Avery says. "Iceblink grew out of individual experiments with sampling sounds and then trying to re-create the sounds on my own until the 'bedroom folk' aspect of it took over."

With her gig doing sound at Moon Palace on hiatus, Avery's working out on her parents' farm in Afton and charting a course for Iceblink's future. Avery hopes to do something different with Iceblink each time, and is already imagining tracks with "John Cage-like string arrangements, very polytonal, like really rich, with tons of harmonies, even adding a choir or something. Dense, harmony-rich songs. But ghostly at the same time."

You might not hear that music first, though, because the next EP Avery has slated will probably take a different course. "Something more synthesizer-based, moody Italian film score combined with early Cluster and Krauty electronic bands, these soundtracky songs."

Whichever direction Avery pursues, she'll likely have theoretically and sonically road-mapped it far in advance. "I will talk it out to anyone who will listen to me for more than five seconds," she says of her music. "What I love about this project is, it really is me just nerding out, geeking out about my process. Sometimes I wonder, 'Why would anyone even listen to this?' But I somehow get people to ask me 'Where did this sound come from?' Their mistake, because I will tell them exactly where it came from."—KEITH HARRIS

"I was really interested in the sound of space age rock, like Broadcast and Stereolab"

bands from the '60s and BBC in-house sound production."

That was just the beginning of the trek that led to *Carpet Cocoon*. "From there I started discovering all these blogs that just ripped vinyls and cassettes and collected experimental music from across all sorts of cultures—Ethiopian TV, Japanese ambient from the '80s, the Blacklands folk movement, this British band Woo."

And on top of all that, there was the modern music that echoes through Avery's work. "Newer '90s and early-aughts hauntology-inspired music, things like Burial, artists who are inspired by the haunting of a nostalgic sound, not from any certain decade but it just sounds generally nostalgic, or like it could have

(That trio has an album called *Signal Quest* coming out at the end of October, Avery says. "If you like Iceblink, you'll probably like this, because it's the same three musicians.")

The working process was different for *Carpet Cocoon*. "For Iceblink, I was collaging these takes that Mitch or Cole did for me," says Avery. "After I had recorded a bunch of takes I would move the snippets around, layer them on top of each other or even re-pitch them and do all this fancy, futuristic re-editing. There's a sort of post-improvisational aspect to it. They would create these melodies and I would restring them and weave them together with a certain song I had in mind."

Avery instructed Pulice to "play the







2. MUUN BATO

With their self-titled debut album, Muun Bato bring the psychedelic shoegaze sound of the U.K. to Minneapolis, their music as loose and expansive as you'd expect from a group born out of a jam session.

Guitarist/vocalist Joe Werner (Driftwood Pyre/First Communion Afterparty/Bridge Club) and drummer Andy Iwanin met when they played together at a mutual friend's house. Their musical styles proved to be as close together as their home addresses were—they live four blocks from each other—so they started jamming regularly.

"I already had almost all the songs that would end up on our debut fully formed, so we started working on those immediately," Werner says. "Then we recruited Vince Caro, who plays with Andy in Basement Apartment, to track the songs, and he loved them so much, he volunteered to play guitar too. Then we needed a bass player, so we asked Tim Ritter, also of Basement Apartment, and the next thing we knew we had an album recorded and a new band. The band's sound was really solidified, though, when Marie Debris joined in late 2019. Her keyboard tone filled in everything that was missing."

But just as the group was gaining momentum, with a West Coast tour set to begin, the pandemic hit. "It obviously was a massive disappointment, but we were all in such shock about the gravity of the pandemic, that we weren't sure exactly how to feel about it," Werner says. "You can't really be mad about it because the whole world was basically canceled."

The quarantine kept the group apart for a few months, but in that time Werner wrote a batch of songs for Muun Bato's second album, which is mostly finished. Now they're back to making music together again, which has helped ease the emotional and mental strain caused by the pandemic.

"We spent the first couple months of

quarantine apart. No rehearsals, or recording sessions. But then we finally decided we were willing to take the risk to be in the same room as each other to play," Werner says. "We were all pretty bummed by that point, and our first practice back was cathartic to say the least. Then we started recording at the end of the summer, and it feels really good getting lost in that. Having that as a positive distraction from all the apocalyptic chaos has been essential to our mental well-being." —ERIK THOMPSON

3. HARPER'S JAR

Forgive yourself if you hear echoes of other bands in Harper's Jar debut album, *Thank* You Ancestor Finger.

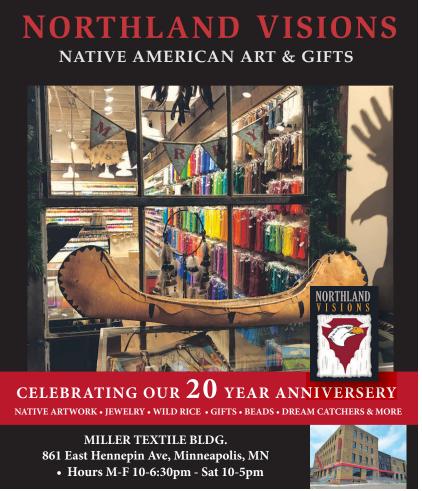
On "When You're Without Me," Devin Ware stretches his vocals over the distortion in a way reminiscent of Kurt Cobain. "Buzzfeedamerica" is the kind of antisocial screed Sub Pop could've been released 20 years ago. The same fitful self-loathing that made Drive Like Jehu kings of the proto-internet mid-Atlantic runs through "Dandy Golden Blue."

"This first album was not necessarily us trying to find our own sound, but finding a sound through a lot of our influences," says drummer Kyle Kennedy. "This was a real roots record for us."

Ware and Kennedy met almost a decade ago as teens in Iowa. They moved to Minneapolis and formed Harper's Jar, living in Paperhouse, the DIY house venue that also played home to members of Partition.

Ware, Kennedy, and bassist Alex Dunn became the de facto house band there, playing three nights a week and over 100 gigs. After Paperhouse was condemned in summer 2019, Harper's Jar headlined the venue's farewell show, leaving the basement a thrashed altar to their band's adolescence.

"Paperhouse and the first two years of Harper's Jar are directly correlated," Kennedy says. "We wrote probably 40 or 50 songs during that period."



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The 10 songs that made it onto Ancestor Finger were recorded with another one of Ware and Kennedy's idols: Jordan Bleau of now-defunct local favorites Frankie Teardrop. Ware's goal was to create a series of vignettes-songs that fell logically in line with one another but never repeated the same style. Big-energy shitkicker "Yakuza Moon" is balanced on the backside with the tender strumalong "She's All Over Me." The shambolic 14-minute symphony "Edie Sedgwick" caps off the album.

3WEN BLU, SHELLY MOSMAN

Though sophomore album To Be with the Birds is written and ready to be recorded, when that happens is anyone's guess. Harper's Jar has been enjoying the calm of quarantine, re-evaluating just what Harper's Jar is now that they've exorcised their influences.

"The Harper's Jar sound, we found it on this record," Ware says of Birds. "It's a much heavier record. And I think it sounds like right now, which is something I've always been working toward."-JERARD FAGERBERG

4. TURN TURN TURN

Turn Turn began with humble ambitions.

Adam Levy, the singer-songwriter behind the Honeydogs, wanted to add

another group to his already lengthy portfolio of side projects, one that channeled his love for the country, folk, and psychedelia of the '60s and '70s. He enlisted bassist Barb Brynstad, a veteran of the '90s alt-rock scene, and local singer-songwriter Savannah Smith to sing three-part harmonies and cover the music of the Velvet Underground, the Monkees, Nick Drake, the Beatles, Gram Parsons, and Dolly Parton.

Once Turn Turn Turn started gigging in 2018, Brynstad suggested the band take a stab at some originals.

"I kinda bristled, like I just wanna do covers, have a fun night out," Levy remembers. "But when Savannah played one of her songs, and people responded favorably, it kinda dawned on me: This could actually be a pretty cool thing."

The recording process for Turn Turn Turn's debut album, Can't Go Back, went "unnaturally well," resulting in 12 songs that warmly shimmer with pop melodies that effortlessly evoke Laurel Canyon. "We knew we had something really special," Levy says.

Then COVID-19 happened.

"We got one full-band show in January at the Turf Club, a few more trio shows in February, then we shut it down," Brynstad says. "It was so depressing and sad."



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Turn Turn had already pushed their album release back when the police killing of George Floyd transformed Minneapolis.

"We had the uprising, and we felt: Do we want to put the record out in the midst of this intense social change, does it feel like too much of a ray of sunshine?" Levy says.

In June, the group finally threw its album-release party... to an unfailingly supportive Parkway Theater staff.

"We had each other onstage, and that was a big security blanket," Smith says. "But it's so bizarre to play a song and then have dead silence."

The livestream concert was one of several ways Turn Turn Turn have discovered to perform music during a pandemic; they've also played outdoors at Icehouse and atop a truck outside Grumpy's in Northeast.

Coronavirus may have forced the snappily dressed trio to pump the brakes, but 🖁 not before they realized what they had.

"It was a side project that I wanted to do for fun, that's turned into a really soulnourishing project with people I really love; we text constantly," Levy says. "This band has gotten me through the craziness of the past year. I'd love to do another record and see where we go-let's tour, let's leave the country."

Adds Brynstad: "We're gonna hit it hard as soon as we're able."-JAY BOLLER



5. BUGSY

This ain't Emily Schoonover's first Picked to Click rodeo.

Back in 2015, when Schoonover was just 16, her grunge-punk band Bruise Violet finished No. 2 in our poll, just behind Bad Bad Hats. They'd go on to play Rock the Garden, open for Babes in Toyland at First

Avenue, and score CP's coveted Best Rock Band honorific.

In early 2019, guitarist/vocalist Schoonover assembled a "Frankenstein's band" of loose-knit collaborators-Shannon Maroney, Alex Norman, Griffen Desai-who would become bugsy. Their mission statement was pure.

"We wanted to rock," Norman says.

And rock they did, blasting Schoonover's raw, emotional songs with timelessly crunching buzzsaw guitars. The vocals range from operatic quivers to wellpracticed roars, depending on the subject matter.

"Some of the first songs I wrote were about animals, and that's still true today, and people that bullied me-and the songs I write now are also about people that hurt my feelings!" Schoonover says. One song is a tribute to her late bunny, Benjamin. "I feel like the songs I'm writing now are the best songs I've written; it'd be kind of a shame if I didn't feel that way... that'd mean I got worse."

As bugsy gigged through that first year, bigger and better shows started lining up and touring intensified. The band was en route to Chicago when the realities of COVID-19 hit.

"It was literally the most momentum we could possibly have," Desai says. "And it came to a screeching halt."

Unable to perform live, bugsy has spent the year of quarantine writing, recording, and rocking the occasional in-studio radio invite. Schoonover, Maroney, and Norman are all Zoom-learning juniors at the University of Minnesota, and all the members work part-time jobs. The chronically upbeat buds aren't succumbing to doomscroll drudgery of 2020. "It's very



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easy to fall into this trap of everything is bad and the world is falling apart, but music brings us joy," Maroney says.

Schoonover, whose lifelong goal of making music for a living remains steadfast, agrees.

"Bugsy is my best friends, my family," she says. "If something major happens in my life, I text them before I text anyone else."

Even as everything is upended, bugsy's North Star shines as bright as ever.

"We do like to rock," Schoonover says with a laugh. "You can quote us on that."—JAY BOLLER

6. DOUBLE GRAVE

Double Grave have put out lots of EPs and tour tapes. Lots.

"We looked back, like, maybe we made everything too fast, and we should try taking our time on something," says the trio's singer/guitarist Jeremy Warden. "Moving slowly and being intentional and not being too rushed and excited."

So they did. To record August's sophomore full-length, *Goodbye*, *Nowhere!*, they took a long time. A really long time. Maybe six months.

This was the first full LP Double Grave recorded entirely by themselves—this time they felt ready to do something totally DIY,



totally in-house. (Literally—they recorded at the house Warner and his bandmate/fiancée, bassist Bree Meyer, rent.)

Warden grew up in a small town, and after moving to Minneapolis was feeling the emotional equivalent of that geographic malaise. "For me, it's a lot of personal work with mental health and taking time alone and reflecting. In doing that, I was trying to remember—I was being very nostalgic I guess, thinking about how I used to be when I was younger."

Lyrically and musically, he was trying to make something for that former self, reflecting on the past "as a way to work through the things I was dealing with in the present, if that makes sense."

(It does.)

Goodbye, Nowhere! seems to emerge from this idea of leaving a place, but also from a mental state that doesn't feel helpful or positive. There's loneliness, spaciness, longing. Sometimes it's quiet: The confessional-bordering-on-Dashboard opener "Out Here" begins with soft wind chimes before that track fuzzes into "The Farm," which, like much of the record, serves that perfect grunge-emo-shoegaze cocktail of loud and sad, quiet and sad, kinda heavy and sad.

But in Double Grave fashion, it all plays out in a way that feels productive. *Goodbye, Nowhere!* mixes Midwest emo's alienation and misery with the Midwest region's bootstrapping, maybe-I-can-fix-this mentality. You can hear Warden working it out over hazy guitars—impressively enveloping for recordings done in-house by a band with just three members.

Warden is still taking it slow. On the morning we talk, he's on the porch, drinking coffee. He and Meyer Airbnb'd a cabin near Winona; they're about to drive out of town to enjoy one last weekend before winter makes us all stuck again. They've come to terms with the idea that they might put out another record before it's safe to play these songs live. They're getting married next August.

"We just listened to it recently, and it still feels... really representative. It definitely feels like the thing we've been trying to do this whole time. Almost like a starting-over point. Or a checkpoint. It's definitely our most real record we've done."—EMILY CASSEL



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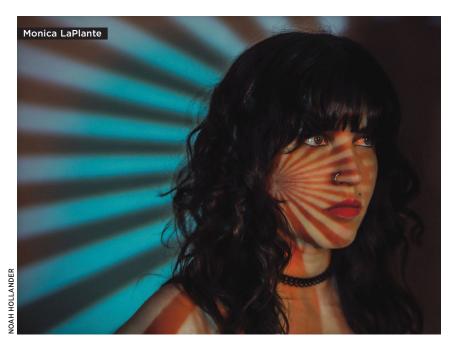
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7. MONICA LAPLANTE

If 2020 deserves an anthem, it could do worse than Monica LaPlante's funky August release "Compression," an ode to an ever-more isolated, paranoid life under quarantine. The lyrics are literal, on-the-nose, and instantly relatable.

First comes "Watchin' movies, drinkin' smoothies/Doing yoga online," then "Checking in with every friend/That can't stand being alone," before, at last, the isolation wins: "I cancel plans to wash my hands/So no one else can come breathe here."

For the record, LaPlante is doing fine. Good, even. The song was her way of processing an ocean of time after her furlough from a job in the service industry.

"The only way for me to get through all of the craziness was to sit and assess where my head's at," she says. "Like, I wasn't the only one thinking I had chest pains, freaking out, talking to myself."

LaPlante and three bandmates recorded the four songs on *Quarantine*, piece by piece, separately, in their respective homes. The result is coherent and stylish. "So Alone," the other original song on the EP, sets a bluesy backdrop for LaPlante's powerful voice, then breaks down into a stomping, upbeat outro. The set is rounded out with a cover of an Echo and the Bunnymen song and Linda McCartney's "The Light Comes From Within," an angry little number that lends itself shockingly well to a punk makeover.

Stuck with songs but no clubs to play, LaPlante has lately entered the performingon-top-of-things era of her career—first as part of a series of bands playing a van that rolls (slowly) through Northeast, then atop a building off Central Avenue. LaPlante says her ultimate goal is to play a drive-in movie theater.

When she was getting her start, LaPlante also wrote about music, including for City



TESSA LOEFFLER

Pages. Before deadlines and mean comments ended that pursuit, she found it fascinating to interview artists, even if the ones on the road were sometimes "crabby."

How would LaPlante, former music writer, characterize her own sound? She thinks for a moment. "There's already such a tone between labels like 'D.I.Y.' and 'indie music'—but we are doing everything ourselves, and independently," she says. "It's rock music, with some sugary pop vocals to it. I like to think our melodies are catchy? It's music that gets people energized."—MIKE MULLEN

8. SPLIT FOUNTAIN

Jordan Bleau might be better weathering the this year better than any other musician in the Twin Cities.

"I'm not huge into shows anymore," Bleau says. "I don't like bars. Or going out, really."

Split Fountain, the latest project from the former frontman of Frankie Teardrop, squeezed in only a handful of shows before the virus cleared stages and closed doors. But as far as Bleau was concerned, the

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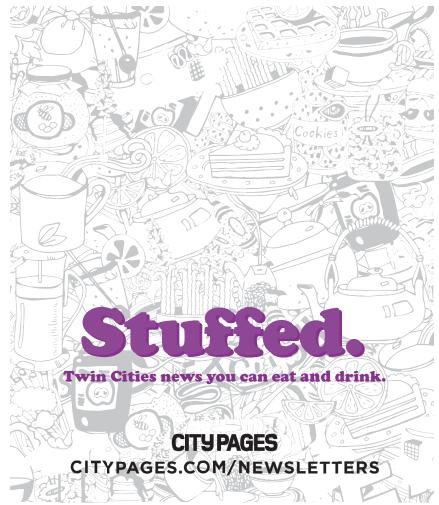
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.band's principal work was done before they even debuted.

"I wanted to focus on the songs, and on my knowing they're good," he says.

Split Fountain is Bleau's third collaboration with bassist and vocalist Rose von Muchow (Wetter, Cheap Fantasy) and first with drummer Fez Felzan (Wild Firth), whom Bleau calls "the best drummer around." Bleau's goal with the trio was to focus on songwriting and recording; concerts could come later.

The group spent six months practicing and perfecting the five songs on *Crosstown*, released in August, and it shows. These are finely crafted, poppy guitar-rock songs, constructed to deliver melancholy lyrics and sensitive harmonies.

The only thing that feels out of place on the EP is the year it was released. Bleau says he'd been listening to artists like Jackson Browne, Tom Petty, and the Rolling Stones, the sort of music that, he says, seems "pretty uncool" to try making these days.

The title track off *Crosstown* is the catchiest, probably the one you'd most like to dance to at a show, but Bleau's favorite is "Wild Heart," a moody slow burn he wrote, start to finish, in a half-hour. The track is the best showcase for the interplay between his and von Muchow's voices, his bare and searching, hers airy and pretty.

There's more Split Fountain music on the way, though Felzan, who's enrolled in grad school and isn't in the same pandemic "pod" as his bandmates, might have to contribute the rhythm remotely. Bleau says the new songs are driven by the same urge that drove him to form the band in the first place.

"I haven't heard a lot of what I'm looking for in music around here lately," he says. "To me, that means I need to make it."

And if that finished product ever gets a concert debut, fans should watch for group members' stylish entrances.

"We're a motorcycle band now!" says von

Muchow, noting that she took up riding to pass time during quarantine, joining Bleau in this hobby. And Felzan? Well... "Fez drives a Hyundai."—MIKE MULLEN

9. NIIICE.

A few themes pop up over and over in niiice. songs. Getting stoned. Staying inside. Getting stoned and staying inside. And the fact that winter sucks.

"I hate the cold so much," says niiice. vocalist-guitarist Roddie Gadeberg. "Growing up, I always told myself I am not moving somewhere that is cold. Fuck that. I don't want my face to hurt when I go outside. So I moved to Minnesota. It's worse!"

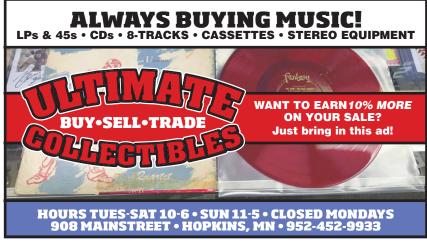
Gadeberg and drummer Sage Livergood hail from Montana—bassist Abe Anderson is from here and, for the record, doesn't mind the cold that much—and they're quick to denounce their home state, too. (It's brown and covered in grasshoppers and "everything catches on fire.")

But niiice.'s great gift (on songs or in interviews) is making complaints (about the weather, or your job, or friends who are ignoring you) in a way that doesn't sound... so complain-y? "The weather's fucked, life fucking sucks—but what's new with you?" Gadeberg sings on "Snowbored," from last year's infinitely play-on-repeatable EP *Never Better*.

On their new full-length Internet Friends, grievances range from small-scale annoyances to big-picture anxieties. They might pinball from the fact that "my back hurts really bad" to "I feel like I'm wasting my life," as they do on single "Shlonkey Kong." On "2 Hi," there's "too much noise," and on "FRESCO MODE," "I can't make myself smile"

But it's all buoyed by bouncing guitars and Gadeberg's scream-along delivery. They're self-described party punx, and whining to the point of being annoying definitely doesn't count as partying. (Right, Andrew WK?)









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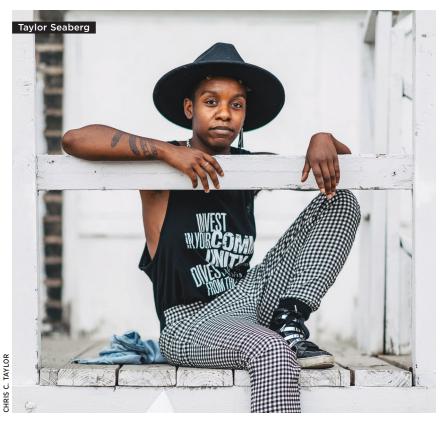
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Of course, it's a tough time to be a party punk. Niiice. used to play, like, 10 shows a month. With venues closed and that goddamn cold moving in, it's not a great time to be a band with a lot of live energy.

"What I'm actually more scared about than releasing this album is that I'm not going to have anything to look forward to. That's kind of been the only thing keeping me going," Livergood told us days before *Internet Friends* dropped. Plus, "I have a fear that everyone's gonna like—not even forget about us, just shows in general."

Gadeberg shares that fear—will everyone go to shows again as readily as he will? But he's holding out hope: "When shows do come back eventually, I think it'll be pretty lit.... They've gotta be."—EMILY CASSEL

10. TAYLOR SEABERG

"Because of everything that's happened, I'm making the most intentional music I've ever made," says Taylor Seaberg.

No one who lived through 2020 in the Twin Cities needs the phrase "everything that's happened" further explained. And no one who pays attention to local music needs much of an introduction to Taylor Seaberg. A restless performer and collaborator, moving from project to project, inside and out of music, Seaberg is best known currently for their work with the Black Velvet Punks, who perform a mix of hip-hop, jazz, and rock.

And Seaberg has been keeping busy with the Punks, who recorded new music over the summer and have been releasing a new video every Wednesday. But that's hardly the full extent of their 2020

musical output. You can sample two other projects this weekend at a pre-recorded KFAI *MinneCulture* show: "Pandemonium," recorded with Kory LaQuess, and "Sucio" (Spanish for "dirty"), a collaboration with Beatriz Lima (a Cedar Commissions recipient) and drummer Glory Yard (who you might have seen on *SNL* drumming for Lizzo).

"It's 'dirty' in the sense of society thinking I'm dirty because I'm trans, because I'm black, thinking I'm no longer human or worthy of empathy and compassion," Seaberg explains.

But no effort has drawn Seaberg's commitment like the one that grew out of a benefit near George Floyd Square this summer. "The overarching project I've been working on collaboratively with Twin Cities artists, audio engineers, and videographers is 'The Art of the Revolution," says Seaberg. "We are slowly releasing our own live in-studio sessions, and I'm doing additional tracking for artists/recording additional instrumentation."

A military brat born into a musical family in Germany and raised... well, everywhere, Seaberg came to Minneapolis (their mom's hometown) in 2011. And yet, they say, not till this year did they feel fully plugged into a thriving, socially committed scene. And now they want to give back.

"I'm interested in using a platform as an artist to create opportunities for other people," says Seaberg. "I can get grants, I can open doors, and I use those abilities to create equity and accessibility."

As for the music they make, "I put it out into the world and then I let it go."-KEITH HARRIS @









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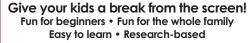
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ARAH BRUMBLE

AN EPIC STORY OF GOOD TIMES

Or, a pizza joint that kicks ass through pandemic bad times

BY SARAH BRUMBLE

hen Franz Gilbertson, the proprietor of south Minneapolis's Good Times Pizza, stumbled on the former Peter Pan dry cleaner space fresh after returning to the Midwest from Seattle, he thought maybe it was time to follow through on an idea he'd long toyed with: building a laid-back neighborhood watering hole with tavernstyle pizzas.

Gilbertson was charmed by the prospect of converting the Kingfield space, right by his new home. "It made a lot of sense to me to work on trying to start a project here," he says, reflecting on Good Times' pure beginnings. After struggling to get a hold of the landlord and finally signing a lease, he discovered what kind of a person he was in bed with (proverbially, duh). Plain and simple: Gilbertson might have some regrets in this area.

Run-of-the-mill HVAC updates, done by the landlord's recommended contractors, dragged on for months longer than they should have. "And then all of our windows keep getting broken," says Gilbertson. "I went through I think it was a total of six separate incidents over the course of maybe four months where I would drive the kids to school every day in the neighborhood past this corner, and there would be one or multiple windows broken out, smashed—like the back door, a few different windows."

Eventually the culprit was found—"it turned out to be a sort of vendetta against [the landlord], someone that was angry with him over some sort of conflict in the past"—but between those molasses-slow renovations and glass repairs, Gilbertson says the delays caused him to finish up about two years later than anticipated.

When Good Times finally greeted its first guests, it was in mid-February of this year. A month later, the pandemic pushed the fledgling business into a takeout-only scenario.

"I had really envisioned Good Times being a lot more of a neighborhood watering hole that also *happened* to make these style pizzas—incidentally, you know? Not for that to be the focus. Basically, not that pizza would carry it."

Thing is, Gilbertson's pizzas are delicious. And if his place had been just a neighborhood bar, or one with a menu that didn't so readily lend itself to carryout, Good Times would be experiencing straight-up Bad Times right now.

Good Times' pies are uniquely craveable, and unlike any other offered in the metro. House varieties toe the line between feeling like comfort food and fancier than expected. The #3 (a combo with 'roni cups and dill pickles) started as a joke but, to Gilbert's surprise, has been a big hit. Their white pie (Mozzarella, house ricotta, roasted mushrooms, caramelized onions, and Grana Padano) would never turn up at a dive. Build-your-own toppings include the likes of dino kale, anchovies, and fennel sausage.

They have sides of Mike's Hot Honey in place of ranch.

Each pizza starts with a three-day fermented dough drawing from Gilbertson's culinary school training in baking and pastry. Though they're most reminiscent of those pub-style pizzas (a la Heggies) that go so well with beer, these super thin darlings also clearly borrow from Detroit-style, in that they're totally crustless save for a halo of charred cheese where the mozz' meets the pan. Crispness is the name of the game here.

At 10 inches round, they're basically personal size, and come wrapped in a paper sleeve that echoes the parlor's nostalgic vibe. Sure, they've got lovely wine to go (including bubbles!), but another way the original spirit of Good Times perseveres through the pandemic is in the form of novelty ice cream treats like Drumsticks and Orange Dreamsicles.

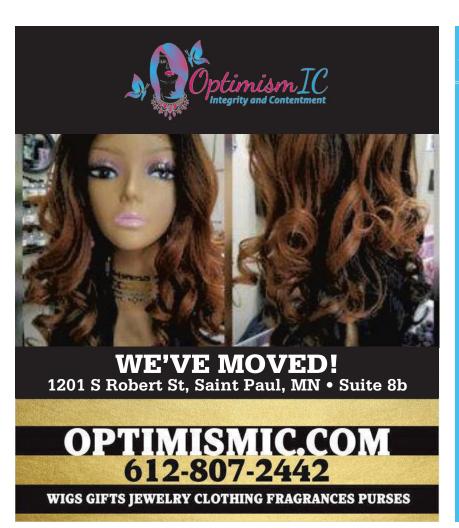
"When we opened, we were scooping ice cream cones," he explains. "Last spring, we started bringing in these kind of prepackaged treats that are easy just to hold." Sure, they're intended "for kids"... but they're also perfect for grown-ass adults who can have little a treat. No one here is going to judge you.

Friendly staff members send a text message when orders are ready for pickup. They don't do third-party ordering systems, and don't deliver. It's old-school like that, and they're stickin' to it, dammit.

While retrieving your goods, soak up the details inside the tavern Gilbertson built: its '70s-era wall-mounted animatronic chef with a Dalí mustache. A popcorn machine (now quiet). The tabletop PacMan game. A jukebox stocked with his personal CD collection. All patiently waiting for the other side of this moment.

In short: Good Times has been through hell, but Gilbertson and crew have continued to radiate warmth while kicking out incredible pizzas, knowing that even better times are on the horizon. Go visit them and see what we mean. (Just call first.)

Good Times Pizza, 322 W. 38th St., Minneapolis; 612-354-3589 5-9 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday ■





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AN EVENTFUL WEEK

Halloween from your car, the return of TCFF, and off-brand *Harry Potter* fun

BY JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

hings are getting real spooky here in the Twin Cities, because we still need fake scares to offset the real ones we're trying to get through in 2020. Check out these three distractions happening this week.

Twin Cities Film Fest

For the next 10 days, the Twin Cities Film Fest is here to offer you a blessed respite from the crap you've been streaming on Netflix, Prime, and other "more is more" streaming services. This year, this enduring event will be moving online for a highly curated series of special screenings. The lineup is especially loaded with a selection

of timely documentaries.

The Falconer follows one man's quest to open a bird sanctuary in his poor, mostly Black community, introducing teens to the transformative power of rehabbing animals. Through the Night follows two overworked single mothers trying to make ends meet, relying on an at-home childcare center to take care of their kids. Black Boys aims to highlight how our nation dehumanizes African Americans through telling their story with kindness, while Coded Bias explores how things like AI, facial recognition software, and other tech continue our legacy of racism.

More flicks worth checking out are *Paper Spiders*, starring Lili Taylor, and

At the Video Store, a love song to the dead industry, featuring film buffs Gus Van Sant, John Waters, and Bill Hader. There are around 70 works to choose from, and over 20 of them are free when you RSVP. Otherwise, it's \$9 per screening, or \$50 for an all-you-can-watch pass. Check out twincities filmfest.org for the full schedule and other details. Thursday through October 31

Boom Island Goes to Hogwarts

Well, it turns out that J.K. Rowling is trash. Lately, she's been doubling down on her transphobia and her support of human dumpster fire Johnny Depp. And let's be real honest here: Fantastic Beasts is a shit movie franchise. So what is a Harry Potter stan to do? If you're not ready to let that piece of your childhood die, we've found a bit of a workaround: Try enjoying non-affiliated Harry Potter events. There are tons of them around town, and attending one means you're supporting a local business, not Rowling or Universal Studios.

Perhaps the most accessible example

is this weekend's party at Boom Island. Wizarding World attire is encouraged (and masks are required, of course). During this chill celebration you'll find an intriguing mix of brews on tap: Polyjuice, an IPA with cherries and mango; Wolfsbane, a porter with chocolate and chiles; and Felix Felicis, a blonde with vanilla and coffee. For the kids (and the curious) Butter Beer (aka Northern Soda Butterscotch Root Beer) will also be available, and Full Belly Happy Heart food truck will serve up eats.

Other not-official *Harry Potter*-themed happenings this week include a trivia night (Thursday) and a themed cocktail class (Friday) at Royal Foundry Craft Spirits, and the Union Depot is hosting a *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* drivein movie night (Friday). Noon to 10 p.m. Free. Boom Island Brewing, 5959 Baker Rd., Minneapolis. **Saturday**

The Deadly Drive-In

Yeah, living through COVID-19 quarantine is terrifying. But it's also super boring. Enter the Deadly Drive-In, a haunted trail-of-terrors type of experience you can enjoy from your car. You know how some of the scariest and most suspenseful horror-movie moments are just people panicking in their car? The Deadly Drivein is hoping to tap into that energy.

This season, ghouls, zombies, serial killers, and probably some other spectres will be taking over a loading dock/parking lot formerly used by Herberger's in Rosedale Center. Basically you will sit in your car and freak out as things come at you. The Drive-In will be a 30-minute terror experience a little in the style of the notorious Haunted Basement. Waivers will be signed, kids need to be 14 and up, the driver must be 18, and they don't recommend you attend if you're pregnant (unless you're Rosemary and you're having a baby). Oh, and this should be obvious, but in case it's not: If you plan on partaking, don't take your convertible to the event. You'll need to keep your windows fully rolled up to enjoy this bloody car wash. Tickets to this event have been selling out quickly, but Flip Phone has been adding times and dates, so keep an eye on flip-phone.ticketleap.com for additional shows. Nightly from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Rosedale Center, 1595 MN-36, Roseville. Through November 1 @

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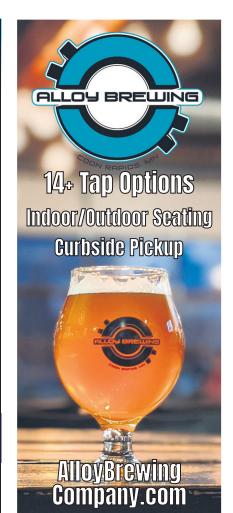


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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

ANN REED, KEVIN KLING, DAN CHOUINARD

7-8:30 p.m. \$20-\$25. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

GABRIEL DOUGLAS BAND

Outdoor, socially-distanced performance from the 4onthefloor frontman on the patio. 7-10 p.m. \$25. Icehouse, 2528 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

CORNBREAD'S 93 1/2 B-DAY PARTY

Livestream. 6:45-9 p.m. \$50. The Hook and Ladder Theater, 3010 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

MARY BUE & THE MONARCHY

Virtual music performance presented by the Hook and Ladder. 8 p.m. \$15. Minneapolis.

PHIL KEAGGY

8-10 p.m. Fri.-Sat. \$45. Heart of the City Music Factory, 2665 Fourth Ave., Anoka.

THE FOXGLOVES

Outdoor live performance on the Day Block patio, with Good Morning Bedlam. 5-9 p.m. \$10. Day Block Brewing Company, 1105 S. Washington Ave., Minneapolis.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

AN EVENING WITH KAT PERKINS

7-8:30 p.m. \$20-\$25. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

BUTCH THOMPSON & SOUTHSIDE ACES CD RELEASE

4-5:30 p.m. \$20-\$20. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

GERSHWIN!

Prudence Johnson and Dan Chouinard celebrate an evening of Gershwin. 5:30-7 p.m. \$25. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

SOUND BITES LIVE: LILA AMMONS

6-9 p.m. \$22-\$65. Granada Theater, 3022 Hennepin Ave. S., Minneapolis.

TWIN CITIES VIRTUAL GOSPEL TAKEOVER

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

RIVER: THE MUSIC OF JONI MITCHELL, CAROLE KING, AND CARLY SIMON

Deb Brown, Jana Anderson, and Sara Renner pay tribute to legendary songwriters. 6-7:30 p.m. \$35-\$40. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

BILL CARROTHERS

7-8:30 p.m. \$20. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

DESERT ISLAND PICKS WITH CONNIE EVINGSON

6-7:30 p.m. \$20. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

OMAR APOLLO: LIVE FROM PAISLEY PARK

8-11 p.m. \$25. Paisley Park, 7801 Audubon Road, Chanhassen.

TUESDAY COFFEE CONCERT

Music about the Environment. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Free. Hastings Arts Center, 216 Fourth St. E., Hastings.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

CLASSIC SOUL WITH GINGER COMMODORE AND JESSE LARSON

7-8:30 p.m. \$25-\$30. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

PAT DONOHUE AND THE PRAIRIE ALL-STARS

7-8:30 p.m. \$15-\$20. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

BELFAST COWBOYS

8-11:30 p.m. \$17-\$27. Medina Entertainment Center, 500 Highway 55, Medina.

BEYOND CATEGORY: THE ELLINGTON/ STRAYHORN SONGBOOK

8:30-9:30 p.m. \$20. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

THE MYSTERY OF ETTA JAMES WITH KATHLEEN JOHNSON

7-8:30 p.m. \$25-\$30. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

GREAT SONGS OF 1960S BROADWAY WITH ANDREW WALESCH

5:30-7 p.m. \$20. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

JOHNNIE BROWN'S SCARY DANCE

7:30 p.m. \$70-\$300. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Minneapolis - Park Place, 1500 Park Place Blvd., St. Louis Park.

RAMPANT ROOTS PRESENTS NEIL-O-WEEN

4:30-8 p.m. \$15. Day Block Brewing, 1105 S. Washington Ave., Minneapolis.

TIM SIGLER BAND HALLOWEEN PARTY

9-11:59 p.m. \$20. Big Guy's BBQ Roadhouse, 1237 Wisconsin 35, Hudson.

THE 70'S MAGIC SUNSHINE BAND'S MASK'ARADE PARTY

8-11 p.m. \$30. Birch's on the Lake Brewhouse & Supperclub, 1310 Wayzata Blvd., Long Lake.

TRAILER TRASH "A TRASHY LITTLE HALLOWEEN"

Livestream and live studio audience. 7:45-10 p.m. \$50-\$50. The Hook and Ladder Theater, 3010 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

DEBBIE DUNCAN PRESENTS THE SONGS OF BILL WITHERS

4-5:30 p.m. \$20-\$20. Crooners Supper Club, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2

DOROTHY DORING

An homage to the Roaring '20s. 7-8:30 p.m. \$15. The Dunsmore Jazz Room, 6161 Highway 65 NE, Fridley.

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "I've been told that nobody sings the word 'hunger' like I do," testified Aries chantuse Billie Holiday. She wasn't suggesting that she had a stylish way of crooning about fine dining. Rather, she meant 'hunger' in the sense of the longing for life's polignant richness. Her genius-level ability to express such beauty was due in part to her skillful vocal technique, but also because she was a master of cultivating soulful emotions. Your assignment in the coming weeks, Aries, is to refine and deepen your own hunger. to refine and deepen your own hunger.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Author Renata Adler expresses my own feelings when she writes. "Hardly anyone about whom I deeply care resembles anyone else I have ever met, or heard of, or read about in literature." I bet if you're honest, Taurus, you would say the same. It's almost certainly the case that the people you regard as worthy of your love and interest are absolutely unique. In the sense that there are no other characters like them in the world, they are superstars and prodiges. I bring this to your attention because now is an excellent time to fully express your appreciation for their one-of-a-kind beauty-to honor and celebrate them for their entertainment value and precious influence and unparalleled blessings.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "If you cannot find an element of humor in something, you're not taking it seriously enough," writes author llyas Kassam. That's a key thought for you to keep in mind during the coming weeks. Levity and joking will be necessities, not luxuries. Fun and amusement will be terms in Justing must be recessioned in the data of a minimum time to be seen tall ingredients in the quest to make good decisions. You can't afford to be solemn and stern, because allowing those states to dominate you would diminish your intelligence. Being playful—even in the face of challenges—will ensure your ultimate success.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): I'm hoping the horoscopes I wrote for you in late August helped propel you into a higher level of commitment to the art of transformation. In any case, I suspect that you will have the chance, in the coming weeks, to go even further in your mastery of that art. To inspire you in your efforts, I'll encourage you to at least temporarily adopt one or more of the nicknames in the following list: 1. Flux Luster 2. Fateful Fluctuator 3. Shift Virtuoso 4. Flow Maestro 5. Alteration Adept 6. Change Arranger 7. Mutability Savant 8. Transition Connoisseur.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): "When one is a stranger to oneself, then one is estranged from others too." "week and to be a stranger to oneself, then one is estranged from others, too," wrote author Anne Morrow Lindbergh. "If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others. Only when one is connected to one's own core, is one connected to others." In bringing these thoughts to your attention, Leo, I don't mean to imply that you are out of touch with your deep self. Not at all. But in my view, all of us can benefit from getting into ever-closer communion with our deep selves. In the coming weeks, you especially need to work on that-and are likely to have extra success in doing so.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): My cosmic tipsters told me that you will be even smarter than usual in the coming weeks. As I scoured the heavenly maps, I detected signs that you have the potential to be a skilled code-cracker, riddle-deciphere, and solver of knotty problems and tricky diammas. That's why I suggest you express gratitude to your beautiful brain, Virgo. Sing it sweet songs and tell it how much you love it and find out which foods you can eat to strengthen it even more. Now read Diane Ackerman's description of the brain: That shiny mound of being, that mouse-gray parliament of cells, that dream factory, that petit tyrant inside a ball of bone, that huddle of neurons calling all the plays, that little everywhere, that fickle pleasuredome."

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I vote in American elections, but I've never belonged to a political party. One of my favorite politicians is Bernie Sanders, who for most of his career has been an Independent. But now I'm a staunch advocate for the Democrats. Mryl Beasuse Republicans are so thoroughly under the curse of the nasty, cruel, toxic person known as Donald Trump. I'm convinced that it's crucial for our country's well-being that Democrats achieve total victory in the upcoming election. In accordance with astrological omens, I urge you to do your personal equivalent of what I've done: Uhambiguously align yourself with influences that represent your highest, noblest values. Take a sacred stand not just for yourself, but also in behalf of

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "I loathe narcissism, but I approve of vanity," said fashion writer Diana Vreeland. Here's how I interpret that: People who care mostly for their own feelings and welfare, and who believe they're more important than everyone else, are boring and repellent. But those who enjoy looking their best and expressing their unique beauty may do so out of a desire to share their gifts with the world. Their motivation might be artistry and generosity, not self-centeredness. In accordance with cosmic potentials, Scorpio, I invite you to elude the temptations of narcissism as you explore benevolent forms of vanity.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Yes, do let people see you sweat. At least for now, be forthright and revelatory. Let people witness your secret fire, your fierce tang, your salty tears, and your unhealed wounds. Hold nothing back as you give what you haven't been able to give before. Be gleefully expressive as you unveil every truth, every question, every buried joy. Don't be crude and insensitive, of course. Be as elegant and respectful as possible. But make it your priority to experiment with sacred vulnerability. Find out how far you can safely go as you strip away the disguises that have kept you out of touch with your full power.

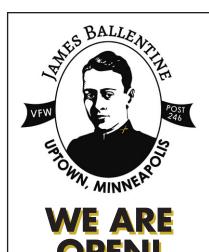
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Between 2008 and 2017, Southern California had two sizable earthquakes: 5.5 and 5.1 on the Richter scale. But during the same period, the area had 1.8 million small quakes that were mostly too mild to be felt. The ground beneath the feet of the local people was shaking at the rate of once every three minutes. Metaphorically speaking, Capricorn, you're now in a phase that resembles the mild shakes. There's alt of action going on beneath the surface, although not much of its obvious. I think this is a good thing. The changes you're shepherding are proceeding at a safe, gradual, well-integrated pace.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): No American woman was allowed to earn a medical degree and practice as a physician until Aquarian-born Elizabeth Blackwell did it in 1849. It was an almost impossible feat, since the all-male college she attended undermined her mercilessly. Once she begen air niaire Conege's site attention unterinition ten meticiassisty. Once site began her carrier as a doctor, she constantly had to outwit men who made it difficult for her. Nevertheless, she persisted. Eventually, she helped create a medical school for women in England and made it possible for 476 women to practice medicine there. I propose that we make her your patron saint for now. May she inspire you to redouble your diligent pursuit of your big dream. Here's your motto: "Nevertheless, I'm persisting."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I fear my expression may not be extravagant enough, may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limit of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced." You'll be wise to have a similar fear, Pisces. According to my analysis, you can generate good fortune for yourself by transcending what you already know and think. Life is conspiring to nudge you and cax you into seeking experiences that will expand your understanding of everything. Take advantage of this opportunity to blow your own mind!

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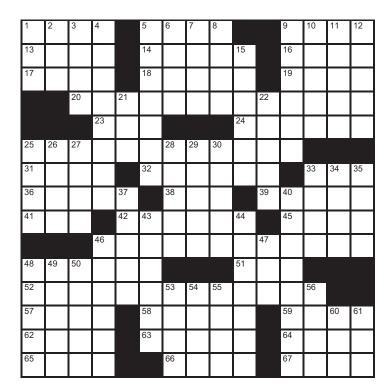
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Across

- Crash-examining org. 1
- "Pick me! Pick me!" 5
- 9 Stoker of horror
- Dance floor filler by 13 the Village People
- 14 "Everybody knows that!'
- 16 Whiffenpoof's school
- 17 **Bigwig**
- 18 Big name in filtration
- 19 Let forth
- Condom used by 20 superspy Jason?
- 23 Messenger ____
- "May I have a volunteer?"
- Subject that will drive you crazy?
- Protected from the 31 elements, as on a yacht
- R&B/yacht rock 32 singer Robbie
- 33 Totally amazing
- 36 Cheering crowd sounds
- 38 _ chi ch'uan (Chinese discipline)
- 39 Wine in Sangria
- 41 Ticked, as a box 42 **Luxury Hondas**
- 45 Shit slinger
- Change everybody 46 on an advisory
- committee? 48 **Epiglottis spot**
- Mom's surrounded 51 by them
- Won't share a 52 "Survivor" prize?
- 57 Ladder spanner
- Calliope's sister
- 59 Mayonnaise base

- Frozen waffle that comes in Homestyle and Chocolatey Chip varieties
- I liner?
- Scrape that only Dr. Mom can see
- 65 Sharpen
- 66 Inner child, maybe?
- Arm bone

Down

- FDR Drive loc.
- Rival of Bossip and Perez Hilton
- Union breaker
- It's a round
- Consistent with one's image
- Road rager's punching bag
- Slobbering dog in panels
- Homes with thatched roofs, maybe
- "Ciao, darling"
- "First Blood" hero John
- Many a Comic-Con cosplaver
- Scotland Yard measurement?
- Capital of Zimbabwe
- Article written by Victor Hugo
- Al in the International Motorsports Hall
- Comic who said "Whatever it is, I'm against it"
- Plant with
- healing juices Without any charge 27

- Laugh-a-minute type 28 Eye-popping paintings
- __ Heep (hard rockers)
- Law that allows govt. documents to be released
- 34 Almost shut
- 35 Singing storyteller
- Word (gobbledygook)
- Comment said when someone walks into a bad cell
- A lot of people live here
- Escorted away
- 46 Drew a blank
- Meas, for obesity 47
- Did some relief work "Dancing With the
- Stars" judge Derek
- 50 Actor's versatility
- Grunts' grub 53
- 54 She might be a nag
- Internet bill, e.g.: Abbr. Blood-curdling scream
- **Actress Shaye** of horror films
- Kiwi parrot

Last Week's Answer



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Don't Give Up

The guy for me doesn't exist—how do I stop wanting him?

orrowing Gen Z's love for labeling everything: I'm a 46-year-old homoromantic asexual Canadian faggot. For me, that means I'd like to love and be loved by another man, but I'd hate having sex with him. To add a vexing complication, I also need some sort of power imbalance. Ideally, I would fall somewhere between being a man's sub and slave.

I've been searching for this since I came out in my early twenties. I've tried everything. Online, bars, hobby groups, friends, hookups. Vanilla relationships, single Masters, dominant couples, sex workers. I've spent thousands of dollars on both men and therapy, but here I am busted, miserable, and alone. The point is that no one—and I mean absolutely no one—wants what I want. My dream dude doesn't exist. It's easy to tell someone to move on, that there are other fish in the sea, etc., but sometimes your sea is a puddle and you really are the only guppy. I'm considering ending my life before the end of the year.

I can't shake the deep sadness and disappointment and misery that I feel—and this isn't even touching on my current unemployment or newly chronic health issues. What would you do if you were in my shoes? How does one switch off the built-in romantic drive? SOUGHT A DOM ACCEPTING

SAD SINGLEHOOD

I'm sorry you haven't found your ideal man, SADASS, or the right dominant couple or a vanilla guy you could love and a dominant sex worker you could see on the side. Not everyone finds their ideal mate/ position/situation, despite our best efforts, which is why it's important that we build lives for ourselves that are rich and rewarding while we look for our dream dude(s). Because then even if we're unhappily single, we still have meaning and pleasure in our lives. And that makes it easier for us to hope that it could still happen for us, or happen

(Please note: I'm qualifying "single" with "unhappy" here not because all single people are unhappy—which is absolutely untrue-but because this single person, SADASS, is unhappy.)

I have to assume it has happened for you



Dan Savage

once or twice, SADASS. While none of your relationships with any of the vanilla guys, single Masters, dominant couples, or sex workers you've met along the way turned into long-term connections, there had to have been some good times and real-if not lasting-connections over the years. Instead of seeing those relationships as a string of failures because they all ended, SADASS, you should see them as a long series of successful short-term relationships. And while you may regret that none lasted for years or decades, there's nothing about being partnered that immunizes a person against regret. If you were still with one of those vanilla guys, you might always regret not meeting a Master; if you were with a Master or a dominant couple, you might regret-from time to time-not having a more egalitarian relationship.

Although you say you're not interested in having sex, SADASS, your interests are erotically charged. If your erotic-if-not-sexual fantasies are causing you distress-if you want to switch off your built-in romantic/ erotic drive-anti-depressants often lower and sometimes tank a person's libido. Often that's an unwelcome side effect, but you may find it a blessing-at least for now, while you're dealing with your health and employment issues. It's an extreme move but it's far less extreme than the one you've been contemplating, so it might be worth discussing with a sex-positive, kink-positive, reality-aware therapist.

Finally, please don't end your life. The world is a far more interesting place with you in it. And while finding a romantic partner is never the solution to our problems—it's only the start of a whole new set of problems-I've heard from countless people over the years who found something close to what they were looking for in their fifties, sixties, and even seventies. But it can't happen for you if you aren't here for it.

Crisis Services Canada maintains a 24-hour suicide-prevention hotline: 833-456-4566. In the United States please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255.

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Seeking MARIJUANA USERS **

The University of Minnesota is seeking men and women ages 23-55 who are regular marijuana users for a research study. Participants will attend two visits and complete a series of surveys, computer tasks, and provide blood, urine and saliva to look at cognition and

stress response.
Participants will be paid.
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